



State of Arizona
Department of Education

Tom Horne

Superintendent of
Public Instruction

July 11, 2003

Dear Superintendent/Administrator:

Subject: NCLB 04-01 - Paraprofessional Testing

As you are aware, the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) imposes upon all instructional paraprofessionals in Title I programs employed prior to January 8, 2002, certain minimum qualifications to be met by January 8, 2006. Earlier in the year, we shared with you that the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) had recognized the *ParaPro* Test, developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), as an option for Arizona's Title I paraprofessionals to meet this requirement. We would like to add the option of ACT's *WorkKeys Proficiency Certificate for Teacher Assistants*. A brochure is enclosed to provide more information regarding WorkKeys. For more information about the *WorkKeys Proficiency Certificate for Teacher Assistants* you may visit their website at www.act.org/workkeys/procert or contact Dr. Tom Kiljanek for more details.

A summary of responses to the most frequently asked questions regarding the testing of paraprofessionals follows:

1. LEAs may use federal funds – Titles I or II or V - to pay for or reimburse **employees** to take the test. Applicants for paraprofessional positions since January 8, 2002, must demonstrate that they have met the requirements **prior to being hired**, so it is the responsibility of those individuals to pay for the test, if that is the option they choose. Recruitment activities funded with Title II-A must be directed toward hiring highly qualified teachers and/or principals, not paraprofessionals.
2. Individuals hired prior to January 8, 2002 who do not pass the test may still perform their classroom duties as defined by NCLB. They have until the January 8, 2006, deadline to meet any one of the options*.
3. LEAs have the option to develop their own test, should they choose to do so. They should be aware of the need to satisfy the standard of "rigor" required by NCLB and that other LEAs are not required to accept results of a locally developed test.
4. The ADE will not be issuing a universal "certificate" for paraprofessionals who meet the requirements. Individuals will be required to maintain supporting documents that, for example, may be required for submittal with applications for employment. Personnel records at the LEA should reflect the status of the paraprofessionals and should be readily available for review by the ADE upon request.

If you have additional questions, please contact me by e-mail at kwiebke@ade.az.gov or at (602) 364-2294.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Wiebke, NBCT
Deputy Associate Superintendent for Highly Qualified Professionals
Academic Achievement Division

